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SEEKING A GREATER VISION

AN OPEN LETTER

The funeral of the Showa Tenno (emperor) will be held on February 24 and 25, 1989. The present government of Japan does not accept the thesis that the Showa emperor retains a great deal of responsibility for the ravages of the Second World War and the sufferings inflicted by the related colonization of foreign lands. Rather within a studied ambiguity the government of Japan is going ahead with plans to hold a massive funeral for the Showa Tenno according to the Shinto rites of the Imperial Household. This ceremony elevates the Showa emperor to the position of a central god in the Shinto pantheon.

We wish to issue a warning to the Japanese government that it violates Article 20 of the Constitution of Japan if it participates in any official capacity in the Shinto rites of the Imperial Household.

The political leaders of other countries plan to visit Japan for the funeral of the late Tenno. Participating in this ceremony would be to recognize, internationally, the Japanese government's intention of making the deceased Tenno a god.

Therefore, the following appeal and statements were adopted by the NCC/J Central Committee and requests were sent to the diplomatic community in Japan asking that there be a re-examination of their positions in relation to attendance at the Shinto funeral rites called "Taiso no Rei."

January 19, 1989

A Letter to the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the Moderator of the National Diet

The state funeral "TAISO NO REI" is going to be held at Shinjuku Gyoen in Tokyo on February 24, 1989. This is in accordance with Article 25 of the Imperial Household laws which states that "Taiso no Rei" will be held at the time of the Tenno's (emperor's) death. Related to this the following questions must be raised regarding the governments involvement in the ceremony.

The State Should not be Involved in the Imperial Household Ceremonies

1. "SOJODEN NO GI" should be conducted by the Imperial Household but not by the government. In accordance with the principle of separation of state and religion, government agencies should not be involved in this ceremony.

2. As it is reported that state agencies and diplomatic officials are attending "Sojoden No Gi," it cannot be denied that the government is seeking to combine state and religious affairs. The government is planning to construct a Shinto gate (Torii) at the funeral. By this action we can only conclude that the government is combining Shinto ceremonies within the state funeral.

3. After "Sojoden No Gi," "Taiso No Rei" will take place. This will begin with a silent prayer on the part of the

ceremony attendants, including participation of the new Tenno. "Taiso No Rei," which includes worship and prayer, should be thought of as a religious act. Thus it should be impossible for the government to involve itself in such religious ceremonies. In an effort to erase the religious aspects of this ceremony, government officials indicate that the ceremony will only include bowing one time as opposed to the Shinto tradition of bowing twice, clapping twice, and bowing once more. It is impossible to eliminate all the religious elements from "Taiso No Rei," even with these alterations.

4. It is difficult to conduct this state funeral without religious elements. The government should not be allowed to determine and control the content of religion within the funeral. It is reported that the Prime Minister and the moderators of both the Upper and Lower Houses of the National Diet and the Supreme Court Chief Justice plan to attend "Sojoden No Gi." Such an occurrence is a violation of the constitutional separation of state and religion.

5. On the day of the Showa Tenno's death, the new Tenno was appointed by invoking the "Kenji Shokei no Gi" (ceremony whereby the new Tenno receives the Imperial Treasures). This ceremony is called for in accordance with Article 7 of the Imperial Household economic laws. However, the government carried out this ceremony as a state affair. One of the treasures, a sword, is related to a Japanese myth and this myth has religious significance.

6. On January 9th the enthronement of the new Tenno took place. This ceremony is called "CHOKEN NO GI." Such a ceremony is in violation of the principle of sovereignty resting with the people and the Tenno retaining only symbolic significance.

In this ceremony Prime Minister Takeshita responded to the proclamation of the new Tenno by using feudalistic language which reinforced concepts of ultimate loyalty to the Tenno.

Also the word "Choken" means an audience with the Tenno. Through these words and practices the Imperial Household ceremonies serve to reinforce the political sovereignty of the Tenno. Such ceremonies are in violation of the present constitution.

The words used by the new Tenno and the response of the Prime Minister during "Choken No Gi" indicated an interest in preserving the present constitution; however, they did not touch upon the former Tenno's war responsibility but intentionally ignored historical fact. Japan cannot escape the criticism of those in other Asian countries who were the victims of World War II.

7. The new Tenno era name (Heisei) was designated by the government and not by the people. This action serves to institutionalize the Tenno system and clearly indicates that violations of freedom of thought are taking place.

8. We cannot ignore the fact that the astronomical costs of the funeral will come out of government funds. We protest the use of government money for the funeral which should be solely an Imperial Household affair.

9. Without debate among the people the birthdays of the late and new Tenno have been made new national holidays by the Japanese government. This is only to officially recognize the Tenno system in Japan by ignoring the voices of the people on this matter. We as Christians support the constitutional principle of the people's sovereignty and a government which practices responsible politics in accordance with the constitution. In this context we request the government to respond to other Asian people and the international community in an effort to gain their trust.

Rev. Kentaro Takeuchi Moderator, NCC/J

Rev. Munetoshi Maejima, General Secretary, NCC/J

Mr. Koiti Osima, Chairperson, Yasukuni Shrine Special Issues Committee, NCC/J

AN APPEAL

Appeal to the Christians of the World Regarding the Change in Japan's Emperor

May the peace Christ be with you!

The Special Committee of the National Christian Council in Japan on issues concerning the Yaskuni Shrine would like to send heartfelt greetings to our Christian brothers and sisters around the world. We are sending this appeal at a time when churches in Japan are facing their most critical turning point in Japanese history ever since Protestant missions began in the middle of the 19th century.

The Protestant churches in Japan committed sins against God and we were disloyal to our confession of faith, as we failed to claim Jesus Christ as our Lord. Actually, very few of the Christians openly stated that the Tenno (emperor) was our savior, but in reality we were ambiguous about our faith, placing the emperor and Jesus Christ side by side, out of fear of other people's criticism.

We were immersed in the quasi-religious circumstances of the time. In extreme cases we created a Japanese Christianity replacing the Tenno for Christ. In addition we forced other people, having nothing to do with the emperor, particularly Christians in Korea, to obey the principles of the emperor system and to worship the Tenno. Because of different faith orientations so many Koreans suffered painfully until the end of Japan's colonization, 43 years ago.

This is now the time in Japan when the era of one emperor is coming to a close and another beginning. There are powerful forces seeking to strengthen the Tenno system ideology; that is to strengthen political, economic, and cultural principles based upon the belief that the change in the emperor rests upon the constitutional

understanding of the Tenno as the symbol of the state. As a result, through the social milieu which has been created, it has emerged clearly that the Tenno's war responsibility should not be questioned especially in deference to his death.

The Tenno ideology seeks to unite only Japanese nationals by excluding heterogenous elements or through the assimilation of others, in order to create the myth of a single Japanese race. Discrimination has been created through an institutionalized Tenno system which disregards its culpability in the creation of said discrimination.

The government of Japan and some of the popular culture analyses provided through the mass media are ignoring the Tenno's war responsibility as the Japanese custom of "not whipping the dead" is followed. Moreover, this understanding maintains that the new emperor, Akihito, was a minor during World War II, and he therefore should not be held responsible for the war.

Perhaps there are some people in the global community who support this opinion. We state our understanding of this situation as follows:

We must remember the fact that the Asian victims of Japan's military, as well as their children living in many other Asian nations and in the Pacific islands, witnessed the atrocities of Japan's military which were brought about upon the orders of Tenno Hirohito; this historical fact will survive the generations.

It is a common understanding that the debts of the parents must be carried on by the children. In certain cases the Japanese government paid small amounts in reparations during the post-war period. However, there are no cases in which the Japanese government paid reparations as compensation for damage caused by war in neighboring countries. Rather, payments became packaged as foreign aid, and this practice has continued with definite political implications.

Shamefully, we Christians in Japan were

not concerned with our neighbors in Asia and the Pacific region. We did not realize the fact that so many people had experienced the violence of the Japanese military during World War II and the fact that their wounds have never had a chance to heal, nor was there any compensation for the damage. The first generation of victims among Asians and Pacific islanders, have passed away. And now, the economic exploitation of Japanese multi-national corporations is repeatedly threatening the lives of other Asians.

While Japan invaded neighboring countries without making any prior declaration of war, the people who were thought of as the enemies of Japan, will continue to remember the pain and sufferings of the war.

On August 15, 1985 the Prime Minister at the time participated in a public worship service for the war dead at Yasukuni Shinto Shrine(*), which angered many other Asians. Even though the leaders made efforts to prevent accurate recording of these events in Japan's history, it was impossible to erase the truth.

If the Tenno's war responsibility is ignored, Japan will be the target of international criticism. The Tokyo War Crimes Trials which were responsible for determining criminal culpability for the Pacific War, handed down their decisions without calling the Tenno for examination as a suspect nor requesting him to take the witness stand. The court judgment was based upon political motives in accordance with U.S. strategy at that time. Since the end of the War Crimes Trials, the military relationships between Japan and the U.S.A. have strengthened every year.

Although Japan's rearmament is prohibited by the constitution, the military power of Japan has become the largest in Asia. The peaceful ways of the Peoples of Asia and the Pacific region are once again threatened and Japanese corporations have continuously violated their rights through economic exploitation.

The ideology of the Tenno system leading the way as the predominant force in partnership with the USA, and this combination has caused the suffering of Asian and Pacific peoples.

Regarding the Tenno's religious authority, his position was that of a ceremonial figure rooted in a Japanese myth. In order to justify the rule of the Yamato race, which was the majority in the archipelago of Japan, a religion was established based upon the divinity of the emperor and authorized by the state.

During the war, Japanese soldiers were loyal to the emperor, expressing this loyalty in irrational ways due to the fact that religion was given special privilege by the state. The rulers used religion as a tool to control the people.

Upon evaluation of the war experience, Japan's constitution stated that the state and religion should be separate. However, leaders of the Liberal Democratic Party have interpreted the constitution for their own benefit and have established policies which ignore the constitutional requirements.

The opposition parties are political minorities. They are divided and not united. They are less capable of examining government policies. Even the court system seems to have lost its ability to function in examining constitutional cases.

It is in this context that the government is planning to hold religious ceremonies in accordance with the religious traditions involved when a change in the emperor occurs, that is, the funeral of the former Tenno, and the enthronement of the new emperor.

However, we cannot ignore the violation of the important principle of the separation of religion and state. It is not only that we are concerned about the possibility of state Shinto coming to a position where it once again controls Christians in Japan, but also it is our concern that these ceremonies are an attempt to re-organize the people

MEANINGLESS PARDONS

through education in matters concerning the newly dressed emperor, in order to control other Asian and Pacific peoples. In 1926 these same series of ceremonies continued for three years, followed by Japan's rapid militarization.

In order not to repeat the mistakes of the past we, Christians in Japan, resolve to fight against the Tenno ideology. We pray for God's will to guide us in our determination and hope that you will remember us in your prayers.

January 9, 1989

Koiti Osima, Chairperson
Special Committee on Yasukuni Shrine
Issues, NCC/J

*NOTE: The Yasukuni Shrine is a religious institution established to enshrine and deify the soldiers who died for the emperor in Japan's wars.

In 1889 it was placed under the administration of the Imperial Army and Navy on the basis of the old Imperial Constitution. The shrine's role was significant as it became a tool to support the rising nationalistic militarism of Japan.

Article 9 of the present constitution which was promulgated in 1945, renounces war, therefore the shrine was then recognized to be a religious body, separated from the state administration.

In 1985 the Prime Minister went to the shrine to worship in order to raise the national consciousness regarding the members of the Self-Defense Forces who had died for their country. This was also an attempt by the Liberal Democratic Party to practice its policy calling for the re-nationalization of the Yasukuni Shinto Shrine. However, there were strong criticisms from China and other Asian countries against the visit to the shrine of the Prime Minister in an official capacity. Following that protest incident the Prime Minister could no longer go to the shrine to worship.

The Showa Tenno died on January 7, 1989. What did the Showa era (1925-1989) mean for Koreans and Chinese living in Japan?

In 1931 Japan invaded north-eastern China, initiating war against China in 1937. It was in 1941 that Japan began the Pacific war. During these continual wars the Korean peninsula was invaded and families were forced to separate in order to serve the Tenno (emperor) of Japan.

The Koreans were used as laborers in the mines, so many people suffered and died. When the war came to an end with Japan's defeat in 1945, the Japanese nationality of these ex-patriot Koreans in Japan was suddenly removed from them. Over the last 44 years the basic human rights of non-Japanese have been negated; they are discriminated against through the immigration laws and the alien registration laws.

The Takeshita administration is planning to grant pardons to those who are currently fighting court battles to protest the fingerprint requirement on the alien registration card and against the law which demands that the alien registration card be carried on one's person at all times.

The Alien Registration Law was issued as the final political act of the Showa Tenno in 1947. The Tenno was responsible for making refusal to provide a fingerprint a criminal act and now the Tenno is giving amnesty to all those who are being prosecuted under this same law.

The Executive Committee of the National Christian Council in Japan had made the following statement regarding this issue:

"The fingerprint system and punishment for failing to carry the Alien Registration Certificate and the laws discriminating against non-Japanese are

inherited from the Japanese Colonial legacy.

Fingerprint refusers and those found not carrying the Alien Registration Certificate should not be punished as criminals. The action that the government is planning to take should not be amnesty but rather should be a change in the laws and an elimination of the alien registration system.

NCC Special Committee for Human Rights of Foreigners in Japan.

AN OPEN LETTER

To Missionaries in Japan:

We appreciate your efforts as you participate in the mission of the Church in Japan, far away from your homeland, while having to use a different language within a different culture and being faced with the many problems related to your children's education.

One hundred and thirty years have passed since the first Protestant missionaries from the USA and Europe came to Japan in 1859. The roles of missionaries have changed greatly, but we have been led by the wisdom that missionaries are co-workers with the churches in Japan as these churches have grown from small buds.

We are overjoyed by the fact of the Lord's presence from the beginning of mission and we are in the process of realizing a partnership in obedience to God in order to participate in the mission of our Lord.

Ever since Hirohito Tenno discharged a great sum of blood in his sick bed in September 1988, the mass media has reported and politicians have acted as if Japan had not been involved in World War II and thereby Japan retrogressed to a time before her defeat in the war.

No doubt there are many different personal feelings toward Hirohito Tenno.

However, we must not mingle personal feelings with affairs of state in such manner as to force the Japanese people to follow certain mandated actions. Moreover, the separation of state and religion which is guaranteed by the constitution, has been placed in ambiguity in the same manner as in 1945 when national Shinto was dominant. It is a serious problem to force the Shinto religion on all people.

On February 24, 1989 there will be the funeral for Hirohito Tenno, called "Taiso no Rei" which will be paid for out of state funds. It is said that in order to maintain the principle of separation of state and religion the Shinto funeral will be held by the Imperial Household after which a state funeral will be held. A symbol of the Shinto religion, or "Torii" will be constructed at the funeral site and an "Oomasakai" tree will be planted in accordance with Shinto practice. A gate segregating the two funeral sites will be kept open.

Moreover, the Japanese government will not restrict itself to attendance at the funeral on February 25 which is the state funeral. The government has decided to attend also the Imperial Household funeral of the Shinto religion as well as the state funeral. Also former Prime Minister Nakasone stated that the Imperial Household Shinto funeral should be covered out of the national coffers. In these ways Article 20 of the Constitution of Japan, separating state and religion, has been emptied of all meaning through the death of the Tenno.

Representatives from many countries in the world are to attend the funeral. As co-workers in Christ we want you to inform your national representatives of the situation that Japan is facing today, and if possible, to cooperate with us by appealing to the Japanese government to obey and sustain the principles of the constitution. Such an act would not be intervening in the domestic affairs of Japan, while those who do attend the funeral should maintain their own religious orientation.

Thank you for your concern in this matter. This is very important for Christian mission in Japan. May God's blessings be on your work.

Translation from Christ Weekly Editorial (Feb. 11, 1989).

WOMEN DOING THEOLOGY

The second Japan - Korea women's theological consultation was held on January 14-16 at the National Women's Education Center at Ranzan.

More than 50 women, including 11 from Korea, gathered to participate in this year's discussion theme; "Women, Peace and Life".

A new focus was added as the participants included as a discussion perspective the experiences of Korean residents living in Japan, thereby enriching the breadth of the program.

The purpose of the conference was to share in fellowship, worship and Bible interpretation through the shared experiences of Korean, Japanese, and Korean residents in Japan.

There was a recapturing of the voices of women in the scripture which are often lost in the traditional patriarchal biblical interpretations common in many churches in Japan and Korea. The consultation provided an opportunity for the women to share their perspectives as to God's love and with regard to Christianity in the context of their life experiences.

Presentations were given on the following themes:

The Rev. Shin Young Ja delivered a paper entitled the "Development of Women's Human Rights Through Love." Sharing from her experience as a Korean resident in Japan she spoke of the discrimination which is prevalent in Japan as well as the discrimination women faced in the Bible; stating that "there is nothing

more important than the right of love for the protection of human rights" and that "the basic human rights of Koreans in Japan do not include the right of development" - an essential right for a full and just life.

Rev. Chung Sook Ja's presentation focused on a "Reinterpretation of King Solomon's Judgement" (I Kings 3: 16-28).

Analysis of this passage was done in the context of the division of the Korean Peninsula with a focus on the perspective of the two women as opposed to King Solomon. The emphasis was on the value of life in the theme of the story, a rejection of Solomon's judgement, and an assertion that life must be protected from danger.

The foreign powers, which have divided the peninsula symbolize Solomon's power and authority. The women who stood in front of Solomon, possessed with God's wisdom, represent the Korean peninsula. In spite of the absolute power of Solomon, the courageous people who are asking for the life of their country are represented in the woman who gave up her child - only later to regain it.

Hisako Kinukawa focused on the story of Hagar and Sarah "Two Women in Conflict." Interpretation of this story was from the perspective of Hagar, an Egyptian slave. It was she who discovered God's blessing in her own way. She was the first woman who experienced the sight of God and who named God - "thou art a God of sight."

Hagar was of the lowest social class. In conflict with Sarah over recognition of motherhood, they were both victims of the patriarchal system, used as tools to bear the expected son for men - Sarah thus became the oppressor. Yet God's love for Hagar and her son was steadfast. Her witness was God's promise for all people.

With 11 of the delegates the conference women demonstrated against the power of the state under the watchful eyes of the imperial palace police by singing hymns.

By- Liann Ainsworth

JAPAN AND APARTHEID

The World Council of Churches assembled an Eminent Church Person's Group charged with the task of mobilizing international efforts towards the imposition of comprehensive economic sanctions against South Africa as a means of pressuring the South African regime to abolish apartheid.

This group visited Tokyo between Jan 27 and 30, meeting with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Socialist Party as well as church leaders and anti-apartheid groups. Press conferences were held on both the 28th and 30th. A public meeting was held at Yamate Church in Tokyo at which over 300 people attended.

Japan is one of several countries on the group's agenda which included France, England, Switzerland, Belgium, West Germany, and the United States. All of these countries retain a high level of economic activity with South Africa. It was the purpose of these visits to help shift national policies towards the imposition of more effective sanctions as well as to raise the level of consciousness and mobilize support concerning apartheid in each of the countries.

In 1976 the WCC Central Committee called for sanctions. It resolved:

"Considering the effect of foreign investments in Southern Africa to strengthen the white minority regime in their oppression of the majority of the people of the region, and implementing the policy as commended by the WCC Assembly in Uppsala (1968) that investments in 'Institutions that Perpetuate Racism' should be terminated; urges all member churches, Christian agencies and individual Christians outside South Africa to use all their influence, including stockbroker action and disinvestment, to press corporations to withdraw investments from and cease trading with these countries."

Japan's trade with South Africa has been skyrocketing since 1975, despite the governments pledge at the UN that it would not increase its trade. In 1975 Japan's trade amounted to US\$1,700 million. In 1987 it rose to US\$4,200 million. Japan is currently South Africa's 2nd largest trading partner importing large amounts of gold, diamonds, coal and platinum as well as agricultural products such as maize, sugar and other foodstuffs.

Japan's exports to South Africa include automobiles and electronic goods. These are used by the South African military and police forces in suppressing the African majority (73%) and maintaining the system of apartheid.

Meeting with Mr. Makino, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Onda, of the Middle-East and African Affairs Bureau, the team discussed Japan's important role in exercising economic sanctions against South Africa.

These government officials responded that they do not have 100% confidence that economic sanctions will bring about a solution to the problem of apartheid in South Africa. They also said they would wait and see what other countries of the world do in relation to this issue.

Before leaving the country the group wrote a letter to Prime Minister Takeshita requesting a clear governmental stance on the matter of apartheid.

The Eminent Church Persons' Group included the following:

The Rev. Canaan Banana, former president of Zimbabwe

Ms. Elaine Hesse Greif, New Zealand, General Secretary, YWCA, Geneva

Dr. Lysaneas Maciel, Federal Deputy, Brazil National Assembly and Legal Counsel in the Ministry of Labour

The Rev. Carl Mau, USA, former Lutheran World Federation General Secretary

resource persons for the group included:

Rev. Frank Chikane, General Secretary, South African Council of Churches

James Mutambirwa, Zimbabwe, Staff - Programme to Combat Racism

Bob Scott, New Zealand, Staff - Programme to Combat Racism

VOICES FROM BANGLADESH

In the middle of his sermon, a Bengali pastor stopped his talk and cried out, "The flood attacked the village. No more houses and no more fields. The flood took away cows, sheep and our chicken. They are all gone. There is nothing to eat. What does God want me to do!" Then, he sat down as if he had been stabbed by a knife of pain and anger.

On November 11, 1988 I went to the flood site. A 10 year old girl came to see me and told me that she has not eaten for a month. She only ate grass drifting in the water. In the girl's eyes I saw the Lord who said, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

I was assigned to the Bush Hospital in Nigeria 25 years ago. I had a dream of working among the poor. However, what I found was not a dream but frustration, sickness, and a valley of death. A month after arriving in Nigeria I had a high fever, vomited blood, and found blood in my excrement. I had to return to Japan.

After I went to Bangladesh I had car accidents and faced many other crises. In 1982 I was hit on my head so hard that bones were broken and I became unconscious. Under these most desperate conditions I had a strange experience. I heard a woman's voice reading Psalm 23. The voice was Ms. Kimi Tsukamoto who was over 80 years old when I went to Nigeria with my family. She told us this story; "There was a small village.

Every year the village was flooded. A bank was needed. The bank needed a strong post. The head of the village became the base of the stake in order to stop the flood." She then continued by saying that I should be the stake of Africa. Once again, I regained strength.

I served nine years in Bangladesh starting from 1980. There were two floods in the last two years. I had to work day and night. Financial aid came from Japan. I visited people one by one. My work in the operating room started at 7:00 p.m. and usually ended by 11:00 or 12:00 midnight. I had to visit patients and could not sleep at night. I prayed that I would receive strength and good health in order to serve the people.

However, strangely God gave me things which I had not dreamed of. I prayed that God would give me strength and God gave me the weakness. I prayed for health, God sent me sickness. All my thoughts and dreams were washed away with the floods.

When I met a girl who had not eaten food for a month, and when I saw people living in small shacks, my heart was frozen and filled with pain. Something pushed me always but my body could not follow. I had to return with my the sickness and my weakness.

In November, 1988 I came back to Japan and had a shocking experience encountering the economic animal, Japan. Politics are corrupt. In order to protect power and social status the Tenno is placed more and more in the role of a holy being. The gap between the rich and the poor has deepened. Apathy, loneliness, racism, and corruption of community spirit permeate the environment. Later on, however, I found people trying to live together with neighbors, sharing weaknesses.

When I experienced suffering and pain, I could bear it, but such a burden was an overwhelming attack on my family, and I could no longer take it. I cried out to God. When I was working among the children in Nigeria, I saw five or six

children die in one night, I groaned;
"Dear friends, there is no such God that
you talk about in your churches. I
looked for God among the children, so
thin and dying so quickly; children who
died on their mothers laps - filled with
phlegm and stool, and children like
sticks, dying from tetanus. But there
is no God among them. God may stay with
you, in your beautiful church buildings,
and in rich and peaceful homes. That
God could not enter among the children
of Bangladesh.

The Prophecy of Isaiah 53 and Christ on
the Cross became one and echoed within
me. The death on the cross is a defeat
but at the same time it is a victory.
Through my experiences I learned that
the cross is the only answer, death is
life.

After the destruction Israel spoke,
"there shall come forth a shoot from the
stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow
out of roots." (Isaiah 11:1) Volunteers
started to work among the people. The
hospital was rebuilt. A clinic was
built in the village. Dr. Hasegawa who
had prayed for us for 16 years, is
working in the hospital. May God's
plan among the people be exalted.

By Dr. Makoto Miyazaki

FROM INSIDE THE STONE

Hiroshima Stone Monument

From the inside of the stone
Several thousands of people
Burned to death, shout out,
"Give me water, give me water!"
Bitter memories of thousands of people
Vibrate in the night air.

Several thousands of people
Shout out all night
From the stone monument
It could not be placed in the park
But, remained along the river.

People were farming
When they were captured

People were walking
When they were taken away
They could not say good-by
To wife and children,
To parents, brothers and sisters,
They were packed in a ship like animals
They were brought to Japan across the
sea.

They had to worship an unknown god,
They had to pledge loyalty to a king
And at the final ending
They were totally burned to death by the
bomb
The bodies were picked apart by crows.

Their homeland was divided into two
Half the body torn apart
A thousand nuclear weapons in place
Why should nuclear arms be so driven in
On one half of our body.

All foreign soldiers go away
With your nuclear weapons
Our homeland should be one
Wind, please convey to our people
That half are calling.
From the inside the stone.

By Sadako Kurihara



THE YEAR OF THE SNAKE

1989, or the "Year of the Snake," began
with the death of Showa Tenno and the
mass media spent the next three days
reviewing the years of "Showa" while all
public meetings were canceled.

However the Christian churches are in
strong opposition to government control
of thought and action in the name of the
emperor.

The government has set February 11, as
"National Foundation Day" which is based
on mythological structures. Hundreds of
Christians nation wide are protesting
the revival and strengthening of the
emperor system. But Christians
celebrate February 11, as the day of
religious freedom.

JCAN STAFF: Munetoshi Maejima, Aiko
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